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Official Records

92nd plenary meeting
Wednesday, 3 June 2015, 10 a.m.
New York

President: Mr. Kutesa ..... (Uganda)

In the absence of the President, Mrs. Al-Mughairy (Oman), Vice-President, took the Chair.

The meeting was called to order at 10.20 a.m.

Agenda item 136 (*continued*)

Scale of assessments for the apportionment of the expenses of the United Nations

Note by the Secretary-General (A/69/722/Add.8)

The Acting President: Before proceeding to the items on our agenda, I should like, in keeping with established practice, to draw the attention of the General Assembly to document A/69/722/Add.8, in which the Secretary-General informs the President of the General Assembly that, since the issuance of his communication contained in document A/69/722/Add.7, Vanuatu has made the payment necessary to reduce its arrears below the amount specified in Article 19 of the Charter.

May I take it that the General Assembly duly takes note of the information contained in that document?

It was so decided.

Agenda item 13 (*continued*)

Integrated and coordinated implementation of and follow-up to the outcomes of the major United Nations conferences and summits in the economic, social and related fields

(a) Integrated and coordinated implementation of and follow-up to the outcomes of the major United Nations conferences and summits in the economic, social and related fields

Draft resolution (A/69/L.72)

The Acting President: Members will recall that the Assembly held a debate on agenda item 13 and its sub-item (a), jointly with agenda item 115, at its 51st plenary meeting, on 14 November 2014. Members will also recall that, under sub-item (a) of agenda item 13, the Assembly adopted resolution 69/108, at its 65th plenary meeting, on 8 December 2014.

I now give the floor to the representative of Hungary to introduce draft resolution A/69/L.72.

Ms. Bogyay (Hungary): I have the honour to introduce draft resolution A/69/L.72, entitled "World Statistics Day", under sub-item (a) of agenda item 13. By adopting the draft resolution, the General Assembly would designate 20 October 2015 as the second World Statistics Day, under the general theme "Better data, better lives". The draft resolution calls on Member States, members of United Nations specialized agencies, the United Nations system, other international and regional organizations and all other stakeholders to observe the day in an appropriate manner. The General Assembly will also decide to celebrate World Statistics Day every five years on 20 October.

Having achieved consensus after just two rounds of informal consultations, the text builds on resolution 64/267, which designated 20 October 2010 as World Statistics Day, and follows up on decision 45/113 of the United Nations Statistical Commission. The proposal does not create any additional programme budget implications for the United Nations system.

Hungary's interest in the issue of statistics and its decision to actively promote a draft resolution creating impetus for further dialogue and interaction in the fields of statistics stems from its role as former co-Chair of the Open Working Group of the General Assembly on Sustainable Development Goals and from its long-standing leadership activities in the Statistical

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Commission. The role of statistics and reliable data in general and in the planning, implementation and monitoring of the future sustainable development agenda has been reconfirmed time and time again. There is a need to advance innovation and analysis to support national data capacities and a global data partnership.

Since statistics are at the crossroads, there is no better moment and method to affirm this than in a General Assembly resolution that brings worldwide focus to the topic. World Statistics Day creates a universal platform that enhances visibility and facilitates the organization of events and the achievement of synergies. The initiative provides a universal framework for, and new focus on, statistical activities. However, its concrete utilization at the national, regional and international levels remains in the hands of the different stakeholders, based on their special circumstances, needs and priorities.

The first World Statistics Day, in 2010, was an overwhelming success, with activities being organized in more than 130 Member States and territories and by at least 40 international and regional organizations and entities. We have every reason to presume that these results will be surpassed in 2015.

In conclusion, I would like to thank Member States from the bottom of my heart for their overwhelming support for and constructive participation in the open and transparent consultations. We also appreciate the qualified support of the truly cross-regional group of sponsors, which reflects the universal recognition of statistics and their role in creating better lives. In this spirit, Hungary and the sponsors respectfully call on all Member States to support the draft resolution.

The Acting President: The Assembly will now take a decision on draft resolution A/69/L.72, entitled "World Statistics Day". I now give the floor to the representative of the Secretariat.

Mr. Zhang Saijin (Department for General Assembly and Conference Management): I would like to announce that, since the submission of the draft resolution and in addition to those delegations listed in document A/69/L.72, the following countries have also become sponsors of the draft resolution: Azerbaijan, Brazil, Brunei Darussalam, Canada, Chile, Fiji, Georgia, Jordan, Lebanon, Libya, the Federated States of Micronesia, Nepal, New Zealand, Oman, Peru, the Republic of Moldova, the Sudan, Suriname, Tonga, Tunisia, Turkmenistan, Tuvalu, Uganda, the United Arab Emirates and Vanuatu.

The Acting President: May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to adopt draft resolution A/69/L.72?

Draft resolution A/69/L.72 was adopted (resolution 69/282).

The Acting President: The General Assembly has thus concluded this stage of its consideration of sub-item (a) of agenda item 13.

Agenda item 19 (*continued*)

Sustainable development

(c) International Strategy for Disaster Reduction

Draft resolutions (A/69/L.67 and A/69/L.68)

The Acting President: Members will recall that at its 2nd plenary meeting, on 19 September 2014, the General Assembly decided to allocate sub-item (c) of agenda item 19 to the Second Committee. Members will also recall that the Assembly decided to consider the sub-item directly in a plenary meeting and adopted decision 69/556 at its 81st plenary meeting, on 5 March 2015.

We shall now proceed to consider draft resolutions A/69/L.67 and A/69/L.68.

In connection with draft resolution A/69/L.68, I now give the floor to the representative of the Secretariat.

Mr. Zhang Saijin (Department for General Assembly and Conference Management): In connection with draft resolution A/69/L.68, entitled "Establishment of an open-ended intergovernmental expert working group on indicators and terminology relating to disaster risk reduction", I wish to put on record the following statement of financial implications on behalf of the Secretary-General, in accordance with rule 153 of the rules of procedure of the General Assembly.

By paragraphs 4 and 5 (a) of draft resolution A/69/L.68, the General Assembly would decide that, first, the work of the working group would be completed by December 2016 and be submitted to the General Assembly for its consideration, as stated in paragraph 4; secondly, the working group would hold three formal sessions, at the United Nations Office in Geneva, including one session in 2015 and two sessions in 2016,

each session lasting two days, and additional informal sessions if needed, as stated in paragraph 5 (a).

It is anticipated that the request for documentation contained in paragraph 4 would constitute an addition to the documentation workload of the Department for General Assembly and Conference Management for one pre-session document in all six languages. That would entail additional requirements in the amount of $38,300 for documentation services in 2016.

Furthermore, the request contained in paragraph 5 (a) to hold three formal sessions of the working group would require four meetings in 2015 and eight meetings in 2016, in all six languages. Those meetings would constitute an addition to the meetings workload of the Department for General Assembly and Conference Management, which would entail additional requirements in the amount of $27,600 in 2015 and $55,200 in 2016 for meeting services.

No provision has been included under the programme budget for the biennium 2014-2015 and the proposed programme budget for the biennium 2016-2017 for the above activities, and therefore additional allocation of funds would be required.

Accordingly, should the General Assembly adopt draft resolution A/69/L.68, additional requirements under section 2, General Assembly and Economic and Social Council affairs and conference management, would arise in the amount of $27,600 of the programme budget for the biennium 2014-2015, and $93,500 of the proposed programme budget for the biennium 2016-2017. However, all possible efforts would be made to absorb the additional requirements from within existing resources under section 2.

The Acting President: The Assembly will first take a decision on draft resolution A/69/L.67, entitled "Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030".

May I take it that the Assembly wishes to adopt draft resolution A/69/L.67?

Draft resolution A/69/L.67 was adopted (resolution 69/283).

The Acting President: The Assembly will next take a decision on draft resolution A/69/L.68, entitled "Establishment of an open-ended intergovernmental expert working group on indicators and terminology relating to disaster risk reduction".

May I take it that the Assembly wishes to adopt draft resolution A/69/L.68?

Draft resolution A/69/L.68 was adopted (resolution 69/284).

The Acting President: Before giving the floor to speakers in explanation of vote, may I remind delegations that explanations of vote are limited to 10 minutes and should be made by delegations from their seats.

Mr. Yoshikawa (Japan): I thank you, Madam, for convening this meeting. I am very happy to see you presiding over the General Assembly this morning. I would also like to express our thanks for the support we received from the President of the General Assembly, Mr. Sam Kutesa, during the process of holding the United Nations World Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction, which was held in Sendai, Japan, in March 2015.

As the host country of the Sendai Conference, I would like to express my sincere gratitude to the 6,500 participants from 187 Member States, which included a great number of Heads of State and Government and cabinet ministers. I would also like to thank the Secretary-General, Mr. Ban Ki-moon, for his attendance at the Conference, and the many representatives who made the trip with me to Sendai from New York. I would like to extend my gratitude to the following countries in particular. I thank Switzerland, the host country of the meetings of two preparatory committees, and Thailand and Finland for their tireless efforts as co-Chairs of the preparatory and main committees. I would also like to thank Jamaica for its great contribution in chairing the working group for targets on the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction. Finally, I express my appreciation for the preparation efforts by the Inter-Agency Secretariat of the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction and Ms. Margareta Wahlström, the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for the implementation of the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction.

I strongly welcome the endorsement of the outcome document of the World Conference, namely, the Sendai Declaration and the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction, as contained in resolution 69/283. I also welcome the adoption of the resolution on the establishment of an open-ended intergovernmental expert working group on indicators and terminology related to disaster risk reduction (resolution 69/284).

Our Peruvian and Chilean colleagues made great efforts to establish those two key elements on implementation of these outcome documents, and I would like to thank them for that. Following the endorsement of the outcome documents, it is important to implement the Sendai Framework. We should conduct a follow-up and review that are coherent with the post-2015 development agenda.

Since 90 per cent of those affected by disasters live in developing countries, disaster risk reduction is high on their priority list. The way that the international community shows its support after the great earthquake that hit Nepal in April will be an important test of its commitment to the Sendai Conference. Japan would like to serve as a co-Chair at the donor conference for Nepal to be held on 25 June. It is important for the international community to continue to support Nepal, from emergency response to recovery, in a seamless manner. In doing so, we can realize "Building Back Better", which is one of the priorities of the Sendai Framework.

In conclusion, I would like to emphasize the importance of raising preparedness and awareness concerning natural disasters so as to minimize their risks, as also set out in the Sendai Framework. In her concluding remarks at the Sendai Conference, Mrs. Eriko Yamatani, Japan's Minister of State for Disaster Management and President of the Conference, urged that we establish a World Tsunami Day for that purpose. We are considering a draft resolution, to be proposed at the Assembly's seventieth session, on establishing a World Tsunami Day, and would like to take the initiative on the matter.

Mr. Meza-Cuadra (Peru) (*spoke in Spanish*): In Peru's view, establishing an open-ended inter-governmental expert working group on indicators and terminology relating to disaster risk reduction is extremely important. As one of the facilitators of the text of today's resolution 69/284, we would like to highlight the constructive work by the various delegations and their commitment to undertake action in the wake of the third United Nations World Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction, held in Sendai, Japan, in March. We are also grateful to the Government of Japan for the Conference's excellent organization and work. It was the first of a series of decisive meetings on sustainable development to be held throughout the year, the others being the third International Conference on Financing for Development, the September summit to adopt the post-2015 agenda and the 2015 United Nations Climate Change Conference, in December.

The goals of sustainable development at the centre of the post-2015 development agenda demand coordinated, effective and, especially, coherent action in all these processes. That is why establishing an expert working group to develop global indicators and finalizing the work to update the Terminology on Disaster Risk Reduction is the next step — a small but important step within the framework of the international strategy for disaster risk reduction that will contribute to reaching the central goal of sustainable development that we all desire.

As has been demonstrated, there is a substantive relationship between the occurrence of disasters in a country and its prospects for development. I therefore wish to reiterate our thanks to all delegations, particularly those that participated in the working group. We also thank the office of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Disaster Risk Reduction, whose technical support will continue to be extremely valuable.

Mrs. Robl (United States of America): The United States was pleased to participate in the third United Nations World Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction, held in Sendai, Japan, earlier this year. We are deeply grateful to the Government of Japan for hosting the Conference and providing invaluable leadership in efforts to address disaster risk reduction. The United States was a strong supporter of the Hyogo Framework for Action and will continue to participate actively in global efforts to reduce the risk of disasters, consistent with the core principle of disaster risk reduction that gives each State the primary responsibility for taking effective measures to reduce disaster risk.

The United States is nonetheless obliged to reiterate its concerns about the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction, expressed in our explanation of position of 18 March at the Conference, dissociating itself from certain paragraphs in the Framework containing elements that detract from our collective efforts to address disaster risk reduction. The United States continues to dissociate itself from those paragraphs. In particular, concerning the transfer of technology, the United States supports a broad range of initiatives and mechanisms that provide technical assistance, including through the transfer of technology, to developing countries.

However, we maintain that the transfer of technology must not be coerced and that the rights of private holders of intellectual property must not be abrogated. For that reason we underscore our view that the Framework as it stands does not change the obligations of countries under national law and the relevant international agreements. The language on technology transfer in this Framework can therefore not serve as a precedent for future negotiated documents, including any documents relating to the sustainable development goals or the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, or any other negotiations inside or outside the United Nations system.

Mr. Escalante Hasbún (El Salvador) (*spoke in Spanish*): With regard to the General Assembly's adoption today of resolution 69/283, an outcome document of the third United Nations World Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction, held in Sendai, Japan, El Salvador, as a country highly vulnerable to the effects of natural incidents originating in climate change and other phenomena, is pleased to note the issuance of the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction and supports international cooperation in efforts aimed at substantially reducing deaths, victims and economic losses by 2030.

Taking into account the enormous damage inflicted on its economy by the frequent national disasters it has suffered, El Salvador is pleased with the decision of the Sendai Conference to encourage action designed to reduce economic losses to the gross national product resulting from disasters, to reduce damage to infrastructure and basic services, and to increase access to early-warning systems and information on disaster risks. Considering the investments that El Salvador has put great effort into making but that are insufficient to deal with the losses and damage caused by natural disasters, we are confidently expecting improvements in the levels and effectiveness of international cooperation in implementing the Framework in developing countries.

It is essential that the content and implementation of the Sendai Framework be incorporated as a new building block into other significantly relevant international proceedings, such as the International Conference on Financing for Development, specific elements of the post-2015 development agenda, the next World Humanitarian Summit, in 2016, and the third United Nations Conference on Housing and Sustainable Urban Development, Habitat III, which will also be held in 2016. We also call on the system's agencies, funds and programmes and their executive boards to align the Sendai Framework in their work with the agencies, funds and programmes on the ground, in order to strengthen national capacities to deal with potential disasters. The work of the open-ended intergovernmental expert working group on indicators and terminology relating to disaster risk reduction will have a decisive role in ensuring understanding at the global level, while at the same time we can maintain and strengthen an effective response at the local level.

Finally, El Salvador would like to thank the Government and the people of Japan for their successful hosting of the Conference and for their ongoing commitment at the international level to the issue of resilience and disaster risk reduction.

Mr. Coloma (Chile) (*spoke in Spanish*): Chile is grateful for the support of all delegations in the process of negotiations on resolution 69/284, which we just adopted, and urges all countries to continue to work on following up the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction. I would like to again thank the delegation of Japan and all delegations, especially Peru, for working on the resolution, which establishes the intergovernmental group of experts and serves as a triumph in the fight and work to reduce disaster risk.

The Acting President: We have heard the last speaker in explanation of vote.

On behalf of the President of the General Assembly, I would like to express my gratitude to the delegations of Peru and Chile, which conducted the discussions and complex negotiations on resolution 69/284 in the informal consultations to bring them to a successful conclusion. I am sure that members of the Assembly join me in extending to them our sincere appreciation.

The General Assembly has thus concluded this stage of its consideration of sub-item (c) of agenda item 19.

Agenda item 32

Prevention of armed conflict

Draft resolution (A/69/L.70)

The Acting President: I should like to inform members that the debate on this item will be held at a later stage, to be announced.

I now give the floor to the representative of Turkmenistan to introduce draft resolution A/69/L.70.

Mrs. Ataeva (Turkmenistan) (*spoke in Russian*): I have the honour to introduce draft resolution A/69/L.70, entitled "Permanent neutrality of Turkmenistan". Please allow me to thank all delegations for the constructive and fruitful negotiations that resulted in the elaboration of this comprehensive draft resolution. We wish to especially thank the Department of Political Affairs and the Secretariat for their valuable contributions, support and coordinated work on the draft resolution.

On 12 December 1995, the General Assembly adopted resolution 50/80 A, on the permanent neutrality of Turkmenistan. That historic event was the starting point for all actions that followed for Turkmenistan at the international level to define its principles of cooperation with other peoples and States. We value and take pride in the trust placed in us by the United Nations. We are cognizant of our own responsibility to the international community and feel that it is a matter of honour to continue to bring to life the permanent positive neutrality on the strategic sovereign goals of our State in this new and often crisis-filled time in world history. The path of neutrality and the principles it enshrines allow us to successfully ensure such basic criteria as peace; respect for all peoples, cultures and traditions; tolerance and respect for all religions. Those criteria translate into the practical arena of the foreign policy and diplomacy of Turkmenistan. Time has shown the relationship between the neutral status of Turkmenistan and the long-term goals of the United Nations and the development of States and peoples of the planet and the conditions of peace and security.

The foundation of the draft resolution under consideration today includes the real, practical results of the neutrality policy of Turkmenistan and examples of the effectiveness of the model of consistent active neutrality as a significant factor in international peacekeeping efforts. That was evidenced by the several rounds of negotiations, held in Ashgabat with the support of the United Nations, which have played a key role in achieving peace and agreements in Tajikistan. Notably, the capital of our neutral State hosted a dialogue to regulate the internal Afghan conflict at the end of the 1990s. Today, Ashgabat continues to highlight its readiness to hold further multilateral dialogues in Turkmenistan on issues of rapprochement, with a leading role for Afghanistan.

The United Nations considers Turkmenistan a true companion and effective partner in maintaining and supporting political stability in the region and the development of good-neighbourly relationships, friendship and cooperation. That was seen in the 2007 decision to open in Ashgabat the United Nations Regional Centre for Preventive Diplomacy for Central Asia. That decision was based on the need to make the peacekeeping efforts of the international community in Central Asia more systematic and to ensure that the strengthening of United Nations institutions. There was also an awareness of the importance of the neutrality model in foreign policy goals and international preventive diplomacy and in ensuring international peace and security at the regional and global levels. Within its mandate, the Centre is today the optimal platform for cooperation among our countries and the active involvement of international organizations in regional issues. Turkmenistan welcomes and fully supports the activities of the Centre.

The proposed draft resolution touches on the significantly organic link between economic, particularly geo-economic, aspects of the stable policy of neutrality and the issues of ensuring energy and transport security. Today, without ensuring strong international guarantees for transporting energy and fuel, we cannot speak of stable development of the global economy or a conflict-free secure process regionally or a predictable foreign policy course, for both separate States and groups of States. We have shown that a practice of joint economic trade and investment projects can smooth and neutralize the most acute foreign policy discords and serve as an effective measure of preventive diplomacy. The draft resolution largely focuses on qn understanding of neutrality through the prism of the national experience of Turkmenistan. However, the draft resolution also offers an opportunity to increase the knowledge of modern models of neutral policies. The draft resolution shows how neutral status supports more dynamic intergovernmental cooperation through Turkmenistan's permanent neutrality.

In paragraph 3, the draft resolution welcomes the decision of the Government of Turkmenistan to declare 2015 the Year of Neutrality and Peace. I wish to draw the Assembly's attention to the part of the paragraph indicating the decision to host in Ashgabat an international conference on the theme "Policy of neutrality: international cooperation for peace, security and development" in December 2015. We are certain

that the adoption of the draft resolution will raise the profile of the event and serve to increase the level of participation by world leaders, which would enable an increase in the current awareness of the potential of policies of neutrality in building sustainable peace.

On 12 December 2015, Turkmenistan will take stock of its 20 years of work since the recognition by the international community of our status as a permanently neutral State. Turkmenistan's neutrality is our reality today and it will remain so tomorrow. It opens up new opportunities for us to develop broader international partnerships in all areas, including, as a priority, enhanced multilevel cooperation with the United Nations.

We express our gratitude to the delegations of more than 50 countries that have co-sponsored the draft resolution and count on consensus in its adoption, as it is aimed at strengthening regional and international security and at building peace.

The Acting President: The Assembly will now take a decision on draft resolution A/69/L.70, entitled "Permanent neutrality of Turkmenistan".

I now give the floor to the representative of the Secretariat.

Mr. Zhang Saijin (Department for General Assembly and Conference Management): I should like to announce that, since the submission of the draft resolution, in addition to those delegations listed in the document, the following countries have become sponsors of draft resolution A/69/L.70: Austria, Bangladesh, the Central African Republic, China, Colombia, Cuba, the Czech Republic, Ecuador, Estonia, Fiji, France, Georgia, Guinea, Indonesia, the Islamic Republic of Iran, Italy, Japan, Latvia, Lebanon, Malaysia, Mauritius, Mongolia, Morocco, the Netherlands, Nicaragua, the Niger, Poland, Slovakia, Somalia, Sweden, Uzbekistan, the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela and Viet Nam.

The Acting President: May I take it that the Assembly decides to adopt draft resolution A/69/L.70?

Draft resolution A/69/L.70 was adopted (resolution 69/285).

The Acting President: The General Assembly has thus concluded this stage of its consideration of agenda item 32.

Agenda item 33

Protracted conflicts in the GUAM area and their implications for international peace, security and development

Report of the Secretary-General (A/69/909)

Draft resolution (A/69/L.69)

The Acting President: I now give the floor to the representative of Georgia to introduce draft resolution A/69/L.69.

Mr. Imnadze (Georgia): Speaking under agenda item 33, entitled "Protracted conflicts in the GUAM area and their implications for international peace, security and development", I take the floor again this year to address a very important humanitarian issue for my country and to solicit the General Assembly's support for the draft resolution entitled "Status of internally displaced persons and refugees from Abkhazia, Georgia, and the Tskhinvali region/South Ossetia, Georgia", as contained in document A/69/L.69.

Since its first adoption, in 2008 (resolution 63/307), the resolution has drawn increasing international support due to its human appeal and humanitarian goals. In principle, each Member State's vote in favour is a vote in support of the fundamental humanitarian values based on the provisions of international law, including the Charter of the United Nations, to which we all subscribe. Each vote sends a powerful signal to every displaced person in Georgia. In a country of 4.5 million, around 400,000 — 10 per cent of my country's population — have been forced to flee their homes and remain unable to return due to circumstances entirely beyond their control.

With this draft resolution, my Government aims to galvanize international support for our citizens of all ethnicities and religions expelled from the two Georgian regions of Abkhazia and the Tskhinvali region/South Ossetia. We reaffirm from this rostrum — and this very important platform — their right to a safe, dignified and voluntary return to their places of origin and their inalienable property rights.

We, as the international community, have a moral responsibility to come together and demonstrate our adherence to the humanitarian cause that transcends the case of a single country and is universal in nature. To our dismay, currently 50 million people are displaced

worldwide — the highest number recorded since the Second World War.

The plight of the Georgian internally displaced persons and refugees dates back to the early 1990s. They were forced to flee in search of security and safety. As the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs so expressively describes it, becoming a forcibly displaced person

> "does not just mean losing the roof over your head. It is about losing your connection to your family, to your source of income ... It is about losing access to the network of people around you who you would normally turn to in times of hardship."

Many of us have seen the same sentiments vividly expressed in the photo exhibition "A Story of Internal Displacement Captured on Camera", on a display just one flight down in this building. The exhibit's powerful images tell a story of my countrymen who left everything behind when they were forced to flee their homes. The Government of Georgia makes every effort to alleviate their burden and to ensure decent conditions for them, in accordance with our national strategy and its relevant action plan, and without prejudice to their unalienable right to a safe and dignified return.

The present draft resolution is not directed against any party, nor does it aim to point fingers at those responsible for forced displacement. Its primary focus on human rights is a deliberate choice to avoid political speculation when the fundamental rights of the displaced are at stake. The text of the draft resolution remains unchanged because its provisions remain unfulfilled. And for this very reason, we need this draft resolution as an important international legal instrument. The draft resolution itself and the reporting mechanism constitute indispensable instruments for the United Nations to remain seized of the matter.

As the draft resolution shows, its firm commitment to the Geneva international discussions — the forum mandated by the 12 August 2008 ceasefire agreement between Georgia and the Russian Federation to address security issues in Georgia — gives the necessary impetus to the participants to take immediate steps to realize in practical terms the draft resolution's main goals. Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon has also highlighted the fact that

> "the Geneva international discussions remain the only forum for relevant stakeholders to meet and address the issues identified in resolution 68/274."

Resolution 68/274 and the subsequent report of the Secretary-General (A/68/868) serve as the reference points in the Geneva international discussions and complement the work on humanitarian issues. I would reiterate that my Government is committed to peace talks and will remain engaged in the discussions in good faith to attain tangible results.

I would like now to briefly draw the Assembly's attention to the ongoing situation on the ground. The so-called integration treaties recently signed by the Russian Federation with the occupation regimes in Tskhinvali and Sukhumi undermine all principles of international law and further exacerbate the security and humanitarian situation. The large-scale installation of barbed wire and fences along the occupation line has intensified and already exceeds 60 kilometres. These artificial obstacles separate families and communities, significantly affect the livelihoods of the local population and prevent people-to-people contacts. Due to such restrictions on their freedom of movement, displaced people are not even allowed to visit the graves of their families during religious holidays. While there has been some progress in the provision of medical services, on a number of tragic occasions people seeking medical assistance have died en route to hospital when denied passage through the occupation line. For our part, we continue to remain committed to providing free medical care, as well as other Government services, to those residing in occupied territories.

It is particularly alarming that no international monitoring mechanisms are allowed inside the Abkhazia and Tskhinvali regions. Last year, the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights and the Special Rapporteur on the human rights of internally displaced persons were denied access to the occupied territories. This year, Mr. Juan E. Méndez, the United Nations Special Rapporteur on torture and other cruel, inhuman and degrading treatment or punishment, was also not allowed in.

When introducing this draft resolution every year, we leave politics aside and focus exclusively on the humanitarian dimension of the problem. As Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon rightfully reiterates in his 2015 report (A/69/909),

> "the right of return and its exercise by an internally displaced person cannot ... be directly linked to political questions or the conclusion of peace agreements. It is essential to recognize return as both a human right and a humanitarian issue that must be addressed irrespective of any solution to an underlying conflict." (*A/69/909, para. 45*)

We thank the Secretary-General for that reminder. In that light, I urge members once again to support the fundamental principle of the right of return and to vote in favour of the draft resolution.

Mr. Sergeyev (Ukraine): I have the honour to speak on behalf of the Organization for Democracy and Economic Development (GUAM) and its member States, namely, Azerbaijan, Georgia, the Republic of Moldova and Ukraine.

The General Assembly has convened today to take action on draft resolution A/69/L.69, on protracted displacement in the GUAM area, specifically in Georgia where, for more than 20 years, hundreds of thousands of men, women and children have been unable to return to their homes. The GUAM member States stand together once again to present a united position and request members' support for the adoption of this purely humanitarian and non-political draft resolution.

States Members of the United Nations are well aware of the humane goals of the draft resolution before us, which the General Assembly has adopted annually since May 2008. Every year, we see a growing number of supporters. The message behind each vote stands for increased attention to, and solidarity with, each and every Georgian citizen forcibly displaced from Abkhazia, Georgia, and the Tskhinvali region/South Ossetia, Georgia, since the early 1990s. Support for the draft resolution is rooted in our shared and long-standing commitment to fundamental humanitarian principles, including the right to return, property rights and humanitarian access to the affected regions.

Since the adoption of last year's resolution 68/274, the situation on the ground has deteriorated due to additional impediments to the return of internally displaced persons (IDPs) and refugees to their homes. Our particular concern remains the continued installation of barbed-wire fences along the occupation line inside Georgia, as well as continued unlawful detentions and obstacles to the freedom of movement. The total length of barbed-wire fencing along the occupation line has now reached 60 kilometres, and the process is ongoing. Those artificial obstacles rip families and communities apart and restrict people-to-people contacts, in violation of their civil, social, economic and cultural rights. Local residents are prevented from cultivating their agricultural lands, visiting religious sites, accessing cemeteries and obtaining emergency medical services. As a result, the local population is compelled to leave its places of residence, which threatens to create a new wave of forcible displacements.

The situation is further exacerbated by the fact that international humanitarian organizations are continuously denied access to the occupied territories. In 2014, the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights visited Georgia. When she was not allowed into those two regions of Georgia, she concluded that the Tskhinvali region remained a black hole and "one of the most inaccessible places on Earth, with no access permitted for international agencies". The States members of GUAM believe that it is paramount to redouble our efforts to implement the call of today's draft resolution for unimpeded access by humanitarian actors to the displaced population and those living in the conflict-affected areas.

Moreover, GUAM member States firmly believe that the humanitarian concerns of the affected population, including internally displaced persons, should be a priority in the present situation, and that that issue must be addressed regardless of the political disagreements between the actors involved. In that context, GUAM appreciates Georgia's strategy for engagement through cooperation, which aims at building trust and confidence among divided communities. GUAM therefore reiterates its strong support for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Georgia within its internationally recognized borders.

The States members of GUAM also reiterate their firm support for peaceful negotiations. We believe that the Geneva international discussions are an important platform for addressing security, humanitarian and other challenges, as the Secretary-General himself puts it in his most recent report (A/69/909), dated 20 May 2015. In that regard, we view the draft resolution as an important tool for reaffirming international support to the Geneva international discussions. The draft resolution encourages the Geneva participants to redouble their efforts to ensure respect for human rights and address the issues under their respective mandates. Therefore, we strongly disagree with any attempt to mislead the international community by characterizing

the draft resolution as politicized or as hindering the process of the Geneva talks. We appreciate the role of the United Nations as one of the co-chairs of the Geneva international discussions. We also stress the relevance of the Secretary-General's annual reports pursuant to General Assembly resolutions as a viable instrument for maintaining the international community's much-needed involvement in, and attention to, the issue of the displaced.

The issue of forced displacement has been a long-standing one in the GUAM region. Recently, that problem has acquired new and daunting dimensions as a result of the aggression against Ukraine. As of now, the number of IDPs in Ukraine stands at over 1.2 million. The large-scale displacements in Ukraine intensify the magnitude of the region's growing humanitarian needs and make the international community's response even more urgent.

Taking into account all the preceding arguments, and bearing in mind the humanitarian goals of the draft resolution before us, including to secure the right of safe and dignified return for IDPs and refugees from Abkhazia, Georgia, and the Tskhinvali region/South Ossetia, Georgia, GUAM member States will vote in favour of draft resolution A/69/L.69 and urge members of the Assembly to do the same.

Mrs. Jakubonė (Lithuania): It is an honour for me to speak today on behalf of the Baltic and Nordic States, namely, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Iceland, Latvia, Norway, Sweden and my own country, Lithuania. Poland associates itself with this statement.

The number of internally displaced persons in the world remains alarmingly high, with more and more people forced to flee their homes by armed conflicts, violence and human rights violations. We call on the international community to continue seeking sustainable solutions for displaced persons and to guarantee the protection of their rights under the provisions of international law.

The difficult situation of internally displaced persons (IDPs) and refugees from Abkhazia and the Tskhinvali region/South Ossetia, Georgia, has been known to the international community for a long time, but so far no substantial progress has been achieved with regard to their right to a safe, dignified and voluntary return to their places of origin. The problem has been further deepened by activities of the foreign security forces in control of the occupied regions, which continue installing barbed-wire fences and other obstacles along the administrative boundary lines in Georgia. Those actions compromise Georgia's territorial integrity and sovereignty and have a grave impact on the freedom of movement and other basic human rights of the local population. We would like to take this opportunity to reiterate our firm support for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Georgia within its internationally recognized borders.

We fully share and support the objectives of the draft resolution: the recognition of the right of all refugees and IDPs to return to their homes in Abkhazia and the Tskhinvali region; respect for the property rights of those persons; the prohibition of forced demographic changes; humanitarian access for all IDPs, refugees and other persons living within the conflict affected area; a call on the participants in the Geneva talks to establish favourable security conditions, conducive to the voluntary, safe, dignified and unimpeded return of IDPs; the development of a timetable for their return; and a request to the Secretary-General to submit a comprehensive report on the implementation of the draft resolution at the next session of the General Assembly.

The broad and recurring support for the draft resolution — now for the eighth consecutive year — demonstrates the importance that the international community attaches to this issue. It serves also as a signal to the displaced that they are not forgotten and that the international community will remain committed in its active support for their plight.

Mr. Shearman (United Kingdom): The United Kingdom looks forward to the adoption of draft resolution A/69/L.69, on the status of internally displaced persons and refugees from the Georgian provinces of Abkhazia and South Ossetia. The draft resolution reaffirms the unalienable right of internally displaced persons (IDPs) and refugees to return to their homes. This must be done in a safe and dignified manner, regardless of their ethnic origin. As this is a humanitarian and human rights issue, we should not allow wider political issues affecting the region to obscure this undisputed right of return.

The need is great. There are over a quarter of a million registered IDPs in Georgia. Many live in difficult and vulnerable conditions, with poor housing and limited access to basic services. As they await their return, they face daily challenges, whether in

integrating into local communities or from their lack of property rights. It is therefore important that the General Assembly send a clear and united message to the IDPs and refugees in the region. We cannot forget them. We will continue to call for their return home.

We welcome the Government of Georgia's efforts to help improve the situation of IDPs. The publication this week of the first quarterly report (A/69/909) documenting the human rights situation in the breakaway territories is a positive development. It is also important that national and international legislation be implemented effectively to help and protect the lives of IDPs. In this context, we call on Russia to stop borderization activities on the administrative boundary lines with Abkhazia and South Ossetia. These activities are both a direct impediment to the return of Georgian IDPs and in flagrant disregard of the territorial integrity and sovereignty of Georgia. Furthermore, we call on the de facto authorities in Abkhazia and South Ossetia to allow access to humanitarian agencies, including the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights.

Let me conclude by stressing the importance of the draft resolution before us today. We must also recognize that it will be actions from the region, and not words in New York, that will determine progress on this issue. We hope that all sides, including Russia and Georgia, will use the Geneva international discussions as the forum to discuss and make progress on this issue. Such progress is long overdue.

Mr. Rishchynski (Canada) (*spoke in French*): Our delegation thanks you, Madam, for the opportunity to speak on an issue of importance to our country and Government.

(*spoke in English*)

Canada takes an active role in promoting the rights and well-being of refugees and internally displaced persons (IDPs), and we are committed to continuing to work with the international community to address both long-standing and emerging protection challenges. Addressing internal displacement is a critical element of the United Nations mandate and is central to its work on the protection of civilians.

(*spoke in French*)

At a time when the number of displaced persons worldwide is at a record high, international commitment to fulfilling its moral and legal obligations to protect civilians and ensure respect for international law is vital. Equally important is responding efficiently and effectively to the protection and assistance needs of displaced persons and refugees. The guiding principles on internal displacement, the key international framework for the protection of IDPs, provide a critical advocacy and monitoring structure for the assistance and protection needs of IDPs.

(*spoke in English*)

Canada supports the call in draft resolution A/69/L.69 for unimpeded access for humanitarian activities to internally displaced persons and refugees in all conflict-affected areas in Georgia. We also support calls for all participants in the Geneva discussions to intensify their efforts to establish a durable peace, commit to enhanced confidence-building measures and create favourable security conditions for the voluntary, safe and unhindered return of all internally displaced persons and refugees to their homes.

Canada continues to support Georgia's territorial integrity and sovereignty within its internationally recognized borders. Canada views the so-called partnership treaties signed between the Georgian regions of Abkhazia and South Ossetia with the Russian Federation as both illegal and illegitimate, and we call on the Russian Federation to put an end to its various negative interferences in the region, to abide by fundamental principles of international law and to fully respect its Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe commitments, in particular the 12 August 2008 ceasefire agreement and its implementing measures of 8 September 2008.

Canada also strongly condemns Russia's aggression in Crimea and the eastern regions of Ukraine. The latest violation of a sovereign nation's territorial integrity only further demonstrates Russia's disregard for international rule of law.

Sustainable solutions to conflicts must include respect for the human rights of all individuals, regardless of ethnic descent, faith or sexual orientation. Canada will continue to work with other like-minded countries and international organizations to ensure that those forcibly displaced are able to exercise those fundamental rights, and we call on all Member States to support the draft resolution under consideration this morning.

Mr. Minah (Sierra Leone): Our position is informed by a recognition of internationally recognized norms,

the spirit of the Charter of the United Nations and the rights of internally displaced persons. We see our vote here today not as a vote against any of the parties involved, but a vote for principle. We call on all those who believe in the peaceful resolution of international disputes to lend their good offices to the Geneva process and ensure that internally displaced persons enjoy our full consideration.

As I have said before, we act out of principle, and not out of partisan political considerations. Even though the internally displaced persons are far from our shores we do identify with them. Therefore, we call on all delegations to consider the draft resolution before us (A/69/L.69), which we believe is measured and concise and acts accordingly in the furtherance of the Charter and internationally recognized norms.

The Acting President: We have now heard the last speaker in the debate on this item.

Before giving the floor to the speakers in explanation of vote before the voting, may I remind delegations that explanations of vote are limited to 10 minutes and should be made by delegations from their seats.

Mr. Zagaynov (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): The draft resolution (A/69/L.69) before the General Assembly has not undergone any changes compared to last year's text (resolution 68/274). This initiative is politicized and opportunistic in nature. The Georgian delegation, as it has done in the past, is using this theme and its humanitarian character to promote its approach to the situation in the region and its own perspectives. Contrary to reality and the will of the peoples of Abkhazia and South Ossetia, Georgia's draft resolution again contains the thesis that these independent sovereign States belong to Georgia.

Security is of key importance to the return of internally displaced persons and refugees. Georgia's persistent refusal to conclude legally binding agreements with the South Ossetian and Abkhaz sides on the non-use of force in no way contributes to creating conditions for the safe return of refugees to the region. After all, it was the actions of Tbilisi, having undertaken the massive use of armed force against South Ossetia, that led to the 2008 conflict. Against this background, the appeal reiterated in the draft resolution to the participants of the Geneva discussions to intensify their efforts to establish peace and to agree to more effective confidence-building measures looks insincere, to put it mildly.

The report of the Secretary-General (A/69/909) notes the importance of the Geneva talks as a forum for the parties to discuss issues of security, stability, humanitarian aspects, and the efforts made in this regard. Unfortunately, no progress has been achieved on the issue of the return of refugees because Georgia's approach is to block the considerartion of this topic in Geneva and to bring it before the General Assembly. In March in Geneva, the representatives of South Ossetia and Abkhazia confirmed their position of not participating in the discussion of refugee problems in Geneva until Georgia ends its artificial politicization of this humanitarian topic in the General Assembly.

It is clear to us that the discussion of this topic in New York without the participation of the Abkhaz and South Ossetian sides is pointless. The Georgian delegation is well aware of the position of Sukhumi and Tskhinvali, but stubbornly persists in the line it chose several years ago, which is aimed not at seeking real solutions to the problems, but at confrontation and achieving a propagandistic impact. The proposed draft in no way contributes to the practical consideration of the specific tasks to alleviate the humanitarian situation for the people who were forced to flee from their homes.

We have long held no doubt about the counterproductive nature of the Georgian initiative, which threatens to further stall the difficult negotiations in the Geneva discussions. We are convinced that it is not in line with current realities, will not improve the situation in the region, including in solving humanitarian issues, and will not facilitate the establishment of trust between the Abkhazian, South Ossetian and Georgian sides, which is a key condition for solving the problems of refugees.

In the light of all this, the delegation of the Russian Federation requests a recorded vote on draft resolution A/69/L.69 and will vote against it. We also urge other States to refrain from supporting the draft resolution for the reasons I have cited.

The Acting President: The Assembly will now take a decision on draft resolution A/69/L.69, entitled "Status of internally displaced persons and refugees from Abkhazia, Georgia, and the Tskhinvali region/ South Ossetia, Georgia".

A recorded vote has been requested.

A recorded vote was taken.

In favour:

Albania, Andorra, Antigua and Barbuda, Australia, Azerbaijan, Bahamas, Belgium, Belize, Bulgaria, Canada, Central African Republic, Costa Rica, Croatia, Czech Republic, Denmark, Dominica, Estonia, Finland, France, Georgia, Germany, Greece, Guatemala, Guyana, Haiti, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Kiribati, Latvia, Liberia, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malawi, Malta, Marshall Islands, Mauritius, Mexico, Micronesia (Federated States of), Monaco, Montenegro, Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Palau, Panama, Papua New Guinea, Poland, Portugal, Republic of Moldova, Romania, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Samoa, San Marino, Saudi Arabia, Sierra Leone, Slovakia, Slovenia, Solomon Islands, Somalia, Spain, Sweden, Togo, Tonga, Trinidad and Tobago, Turkey, Tuvalu, Ukraine, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United States of America

Against:

Armenia, Belarus, Burundi, Cuba, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Maldives, Myanmar, Nauru, Nicaragua, Russian Federation, Sudan, Syrian Arab Republic, Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of), Viet Nam, Zimbabwe

Abstaining:

Algeria, Argentina, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Barbados, Benin, Bhutan, Bolivia (Plurinational State of), Botswana, Brazil, Brunei Darussalam, Burkina Faso, Cabo Verde, Cameroon, Chad, Chile, China, Colombia, Congo, Côte d'Ivoire, Cyprus, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Egypt, El Salvador, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Fiji, Gabon, Gambia, Ghana, Grenada, Guinea, Honduras, India, Indonesia, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Iraq, Israel, Jamaica, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Kenya, Kuwait, Kyrgyzstan, Lebanon, Lesotho, Madagascar, Malaysia, Mali, Mongolia, Morocco, Namibia, Nepal, Niger, Oman, Pakistan, Paraguay, Peru, Philippines, Qatar, Republic of Korea, Senegal, Serbia, Singapore, South Africa, South Sudan, Suriname, Swaziland, Switzerland, Thailand, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Tunisia, United Arab Emirates, United Republic of Tanzania, Uruguay, Uzbekistan, Vanuatu

[Subsequently, the delegation of Austria informed the Secretariat that it had intended to vote in favour.]

Draft resolution A/69/L.69 was adopted by 75 votes to 16, with 78 abstentions (resolution 69/286).

The Acting President: Before giving the floor to speakers in explanation of vote on the resolution just adopted, may I remind delegations that explanations of vote are limited to 10 minutes and should be made by delegations from their seats.

Mr. De Aguiar Patriota (Brazil): Brazil has maintained a consistent stance of abstaining in the voting on on the text adopted today (resolution 69/286), as we believe that it can prejudge or influence the consideration of sensitive issues that should be resolved by the relevant negotiations in Geneva. We acknowledge the pressures arising from the substantial number of persons displaced and made refugees since the 2008 conflict. The parties concerned should create favourable political conditions for their return and dispel fears of conflict resumption. We also urge all actors to seek lasting solutions to the situation of internally displaced persons and refugees, bearing in mind their right of return.

Brazil recognizes the territorial integrity of Georgia and expects that the dispute between Georgia and Russia can be resolved peacefully and through dialogue in the shortest term. In that sense, we believe that confidence-building measures and initiatives to foster cooperation should be pursued by all parties, including in the framework of the Geneva process.

Mr. Ceriani (Uruguay) (*spoke in Spanish*): Uruguay is a country that has considerable domestic and international experience in the promotion, protection and defence of human rights and international humanitarian law. Adherence to international law and to the principles of peaceful coexistence and territorial integrity has been a priority of our foreign policy. In that respect, we believe that it is important to ensure that the High Commissioner for Human Rights and the Special Rapporteur for internally displaced persons enjoy immediate access to regions where emergency situations are unfolding, and contribute to identifying solutions for displaced persons and facilitating their return.

Furthermore, we believe it essential to foster conditions that enable them to correctly assess the

humanitarian situation of the population in the region and guarantee secure and uninterrupted access by humanitarian actors to that region. We believe that all parties involved must — in all situations and in an impartial and consistent manner — preserve, strengthen and respect the norms of international humanitarian law, which constitute the foundation for the protection of civilians.

Uruguay considers it important to continue the discussions in Geneva to find a solution to security and stability issues and to the humanitarian situation of internally displaced persons and refugees in the region, and trusts that those deliberations will conclude at the earliest opportunity with a positive result for the people affected, providing conditions for their voluntary return to their homes and respecting their human rights without discrimination on the basis of ethnic origin. Uruguay attributes the highest priority to the discussions and encourages the parties to make the greatest effort possible to ensure their success. My delegation therefore believed that it was appropriate to vote in favour of resolution 69/286.

Ms. Shilo (Israel): Israel welcomes the steps that the Government of Georgia has taken to implement the strategy on internally displaced persons outlined in the report of the Secretary-General (A/69/909). The strategy has brought about a marked improvement in the humanitarian situation of internally displaced persons in different areas, such as housing and integration. Israel is encouraged by the action plan and the implementation of the strategy for 2012-2014. Israel also views positively Georgia's programme of engagement through cooperation, which aims to build trust and confidence among divided communities.

Israel supports the spirit of reconciliation through direct dialogue promoted by the Georgian Government. Israel would like to take this opportunity to reiterate its support for and recognition of Georgia's territorial integrity. Israel does not support or recognize the unilateral declarations of independence by Abkhazia and South Ossetia. We reiterate our well-established position that the way to resolve long-standing conflicts is through a negotiated, mutually agreed upon approach, not through unilateral actions.

The Acting President: We have heard the last speaker in explanation of vote.

I give the floor to the representative of Georgia to make a statement.

Mr. Imnadze (Georgia): I want to thank the General Assembly and all delegations that once again voted in favour of humanitarian principles and helped us uphold the Charter of the United Nations. The numbers of internally displaced persons have been mentioned several times. They are not just statistics; behind every number there is a human life. I therefore thank members once more for taking into due consideration the fact that lives are at stake and for upholding the Charter.

The Acting President: May I take it that is the wish of the General Assembly to conclude its consideration of agenda item 33?

It was so decided.

Agenda item 74 (*continued*)

Oceans and the law of the sea

(a) Oceans and the law of the sea

Draft resolution (A/69/L.65)

The Acting President: Members will recall that the Assembly held a debate on agenda item 74 and its sub-items (a) and (b), and adopted resolution 69/109 at its 67th plenary meeting, on 9 December 2014. Members will also recall that, under agenda item 74 (a), the General Assembly adopted resolution 69/245 at its 76th plenary meeting, on 29 December 2014.

I give the floor to the representative of Trinidad and Tobago to introduce draft resolution A/69/L.65.

Mr. Charles (Trinidad and Tobago): I have the honour to introduce draft resolution A/69/L.65, entitled "Development of an international legally binding instrument under the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea on the conservation and sustainable use of marine biological diversity of areas beyond national jurisdiction".

The draft resolution represents a combination of the work of two rounds of informal consultations, two rounds of exploratory discussions and the work of small groups, all based on the recommendations of the Ad Hoc Open-ended Informal Working Group regarding the scope, parameters and feasibility of an international instrument under the Convention, in accordance with paragraph 214 of resolution 69/245.

It will be recalled that the Working Group's mandate was established by resolution 66/231, and the outcome of resolution 67/78 relating to the preparation of a decision

on the development of an international instrument under the Convention on the Law of the Sea to be taken at the sixty-ninth session of the General Assembly. At the same time, during the negotiations that resulted in the conclusion of the document before us this morning, delegations were cognizant of the political commitment made by Heads of State and Government in paragraph 162 of the outcome document of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development, held in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, from 20 to 22 June 2012, entitled "The future we want" (resolution 66/288).

It should also be noted that the commitment made at the Conference was endorsed by the General Assembly in resolution 66/288, of 27 July 2012, which called for action to be taken on an urgent basis, building on the work of the Ad Hoc Open-ended Informal Working Group, to study issues relating to the conservation and sustainable use of marine biological diversity beyond areas of national jurisdiction.

Today's introduction of draft resolution A/69/L.65 marks another important phase as the General Assembly seeks to put in place measures to develop an international legally binding instrument under the Convention with regard to the conservation and sustainable use of marine biological diversity beyond areas of national jurisdiction. It would be remiss of me not to compliment delegations for their commitment and diligence, which resulted in agreement by consensus on the text now under consideration.

The draft resolution, among other things, establishes a preparatory process to lay the foundation for the convening of an intergovernmental conference, under the auspices of the United Nations, to consider the recommendations of the preparatory committee on the elements and to elaborate the text of an international legally binding instrument under the Convention on the conservation and sustainable use of marine biological diversity beyond areas of national jurisdiction.

An examination of the document will also show that agreement was reached for the preparatory committee to convene in 2016 and 2017, as detailed in paragraph 1 (b) of the draft resolution. With respect to paragraph 1 (i), the understanding is that the elements where consensus is not attained, even after exhausting every effort, will be presented in a separate section of the report that the preparatory committee will transmit to the General Assembly. Paragraph 2 of the draft text emphasizes the point that delegations were determined to build on previous work on the subject and, as such, the draft resolution would decide that

> "negotiations shall address the topics identified in the package agreed in 2011, namely the conservation and sustainable use of marine biological diversity of areas beyond national jurisdiction, in particular, together and as a whole, marine genetic resources, including questions on the sharing of benefits, measures such as area-based management tools, including marine protected areas, environmental impact assessments and capacity-building and the transfer of marine technology".

The informal negotiations also showed that delegations were of the view that there should be widespread participation in the deliberations of all Member States, be they developing or developed countries, as a result of the tremendous importance delegations attach to the work of the preparatory committee and the eventual convening of the international conference for the conclusion of an international agreement on the subject. As a result, paragraph 5 of the draft resolution would request

> "the Secretary-General to establish a special voluntary trust fund for the purpose of assisting developing countries, in particular the least developed countries, land-locked developing countries and small island developing States, in attending the meetings of the preparatory committee and the intergovernmental conference referred to in paragraph 1 (a)"

of the draft resolution. It goes on to invite Member States, international financial institutions, donor agencies, intergovernmental organizations, non-Governmental organizations and natural and juridical persons to make financial contributions to the voluntary trust fund. The emphasis is to ensure that no one is left out.

Delegations were also quite aware of the need for the provision of the requisite resources to enable the preparatory committee to perform its tasks, and therefore paragraph 6 is important to note.

The work of the informal consultations would not have been possible without the expert assistance provided by the Division for Ocean Affairs and the Law of the Sea and other units of the Secretariat, which provided the coordinator with advice when needed. At this juncture, I also wish to thank all delegations that have sponsored the draft resolution to date. It is

my sincere hope that when the General Assembly takes action on this particular topic, the draft resolution will be adopted by consensus, which will be consistent and which will have characterized all deliberations on the question of marine biological diversity beyond areas of national jurisdiction since this item was placed on the agenda of the General Assembly.

The Acting President: I wish to inform members that action on draft resolution A/69/L.65 is postponed to a later date, to be announced, in order to provide additional time for the Secretariat to inform the Assembly on the programme budgetary implications of the proposal, in accordance with rule 153 of the rules of procedure.

The General Assembly has thus concluded this stage of its consideration of sub-item (a) of agenda item 74.

The meeting rose at noon.